
REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Report 2003-8

OFFICE OF CITY AUDITOR – SEATTLE

April 1, 2003

A copy of the Office of City Auditor's full report on the Seattle Housing Authority can be obtained at the Auditor's Web site at <http://seattle.gov/audit> or by calling (206) 233-3801. Please direct any questions or comments regarding this report, or suggestions for future audits to Susan Cohen, Seattle City Auditor, at (206) 233-3801 or susan.cohen@seattle.gov.

SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S HOLLY PARK RELOCATION EFFORTS

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) is replacing low-income public housing units in Seattle's Holly Park, Rainier Vista, and High Point communities with a mixture of public housing and market rate housing.

This review of SHA's NewHolly project focused on whether SHA implemented its agreement with the City of Seattle. The agreement said SHA should ensure that the 832 affected Holly Park households were provided adequate relocation choices, and that their displacement and disruption were minimized during the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SHA should ensure that all relocation actions are fully documented in each case file maintained for households participating in relocation projects. SHA should also conduct surveys of all households participating in future relocation efforts to determine their satisfaction with the process.

HOUSING AUTHORITY COMPLIED WITH AGREEMENT

We determined that SHA's Relocation Plan for Holly Park met the conditions specified in SHA's agreement with the City of Seattle. Holly Park households received advance notice about the project and its impact, counseling to explain relocation options, interpretive services, advance notice of required moves, moving assistance, and compensation for moving expenses. After examining 59 Holly Park relocation files, we found that documented evidence of actions taken by SHA to comply with the agreement was not always present in the individual case relocation files. We succeeded in locating the missing documentation, but this required extensive searches of related files at SHA's Holly Park office and SHA offices in other locations.

Seventy percent of the Holly Park households relocated to their first preference for housing. This measure increases to 85 percent when the criteria for achieving first preference includes households that: 1) changed their choice due to health issues requiring a move to a supportive living environment; 2) exercised their eligibility to return to a NewHolly rental unit when they did not achieve homeownership; or 3) achieved homeownership even though this was not their first preference. The remaining 15 percent that did not achieve their first preference either relocated to SHA-managed housing in other Seattle locations, managed housing outside Seattle, or housing subsidized by federal vouchers. (Photo: NewHolly housing)

